

Minutes of Forum meeting

30th June 2016
CVS Offices, Bedford

Present:

Annette Pacey (Treasurer)	BPHA
Brian Cunningham (Vice-Chair)	BRASS
Bryden Keenan	BRASS
Elliott Stephenson	Aragon Housing
Fiona McLeod	Money Advice at St Andrew's
Tim Papworth	Money Advice at St Andrew's
Len Simkins	Autism Bedfordshire
Jason Tsiricos	PBIC
Paulette Rennie	Bedford Community Self-Help Group
Mark Sutcliffe	Citizen Advice Bedford
Ellie Hamilton	Gateway Housing Support
Jenny Harris	Carers in Bedfordshire
David Verney (Chair)	Advice Bedfordshire
Martin Trinder	CVS
Christina King	Disability Resource Centre (Advice Central)
Tracey Rupiya	MIND
Lila Begum	Stonewater Ltd
Karen Lister	Bedford Salvation Army - Debt Advice Service
David Wood	Citizen Advice Leighton Linlade
Lucy Bardner	Harpur Trust

Apologies

Anne O'Regan	Central Bedfordshire Libraries
Trevor Moisey	Housing Debt Advisor
Karen Nicholson	Rutland Road Church
Kerry O'Neil	BPHA
Noor Mohammed Eliseo D'Agostino	Bedford Borough Libraries
Jenny Hedges	Aldwyk Housing
Wendy Walters	Citizen Advice Mid Bedfordshire
	St Marks Church

Item	Topic	Details	Action
2	Minutes of last Forum meeting (11th February 2016) and Matters Arising	<p>The minutes were corrected as Elliott <u>did not</u> report that the service will continue with a much reduced service.</p> <p>The minutes of the last Forum meeting were agreed.</p> <p>There were no matters arising that were not on the agenda.</p>	
3	Information Exchange		
	Elliott (Aragon Housing)	Aragon Housing are increasingly using the Grand Union Housing branding.	
	Mark (Citizens Advice Bedford)	Overall numbers for the service are high. Discussion regarding extending telephone based services are under way. Conversations regarding Library services are ongoing.	
	David (Citizen Advice Leighton Linlade)	Universal Credit has so far not had a huge impact on the service. The Barclays/BT initiative is going well.	

Ellie (Gateway Housing Support) – circulated new leaflet on the service.

Jason (PBIC) – PBIC are looking to organise some workshops once the implications of Brexit become clearer.

Len (Autism Beds) –Autism Bedfordshire have a helpline number - 01234 350704 (Monday to Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm). All other enquiries should use 01234 214871.

Karen (Salvation Army) – The Debt Advice Service is now reopen with a part-time worker in place. Further information to be circulated.

Fiona (Money Advice at St Andrews) – The service has appointed a part-time role to assist the advisor, which has made a big difference. Fiona is a local advocate for Act 345, which can provide small amounts of funding for individuals. Any requests for support can go through Fiona. See <http://acts435.org.uk/> for how the service works.

Brian (BRASS) – A very busy few weeks with Refugee Week, which went well. New staff are being appointed thanks to the Lottery funding. Currently seeing very high numbers at their drop-in sessions. A Peace parade/ humans welcome event is planned for 4th July in Bedford.

Martin (CVS) – CVS are undergoing a rebrand, and is using social media more to promote services and raising awareness of volunteering and local organisations (@cvsbeds and @volunteerbeds).

Jenny (Carers in Beds) - Carers lounges now at both Bedford and L&D Hospitals. The welfare service is not funded but some provision being delivered through the carers café, etc.

5	Update on current BAF activities	Len provided an update on the trading company and circulated the annual report and financial report. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All funds within the company are allocated for future activities.• Training – plans underway for an autumn programme with potential topics including Introduction to Benefits course and an update on welfare reform• Beds Benefits network - two meetings planned for the year (the next on 28th September)
6	Any other business	Due to various changes by the host provider, including different software and charges, BAF will have to reconsider the best way to host the website. The Steering Group will consider the issue at their next meeting.
7	Date of next Forum meeting	To be confirmed

Documents discussed at this meeting can be found at www.bedsadviceforum.org.uk